

The Bel Aire Breeze

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Complimentary copy

Upward trend in housing is expected

By Matt Heilman

It's still an uphill battle, but collectively, things are looking up for communities in north Sedgwick County on the new home construction front. The best illustration of the improved housing market can be seen in Bel Aire, where diversity and progress in economic development are translating into new home starts.

At the Feb. 18 Bel Aire City Council meeting, Richelle Knotts of Weigand New Homes delivered a report to the council going over the marketing efforts in the Landing addition in the city's Central Park community, where housing starts were up more than 100 percent last year.

Looking at the entire Wichita area, Knotts said home sales have been rising for three straight years. She said

2013 home sales were on pace to rise by 12.5 percent, "the largest year-over-year gain on record."

"This trend should continue in 2014 with sales rising by another 2.5 percent to 9,340 units," Knotts said.

In her report, Knotts said new home construction "has rebounded nicely" in the area in 2013. The rebound, in part, was spurred by property tax rebates that were scheduled to expire at the

end of the year.

The "rebound" in new home construction is noticeable in Bel Aire, where 35 new single family residences and 28 duplex-style homes or twin homes were constructed in 2013.

"We had maybe half of that in 2012," Bel Aire City Manager Ty Lasher said.

After the housing market crashed and the economy faltered in 2008,

Lasher said he doesn't recall there being any new home starts in 2009.

He said the recovery over the last two to three years has been aided with the mix of single-family and multi-family construction.

"We had very few twin homes in Bel Aire prior to the last couple of years," Lasher said.

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Short-handed Bel Aire Police Department forges ahead

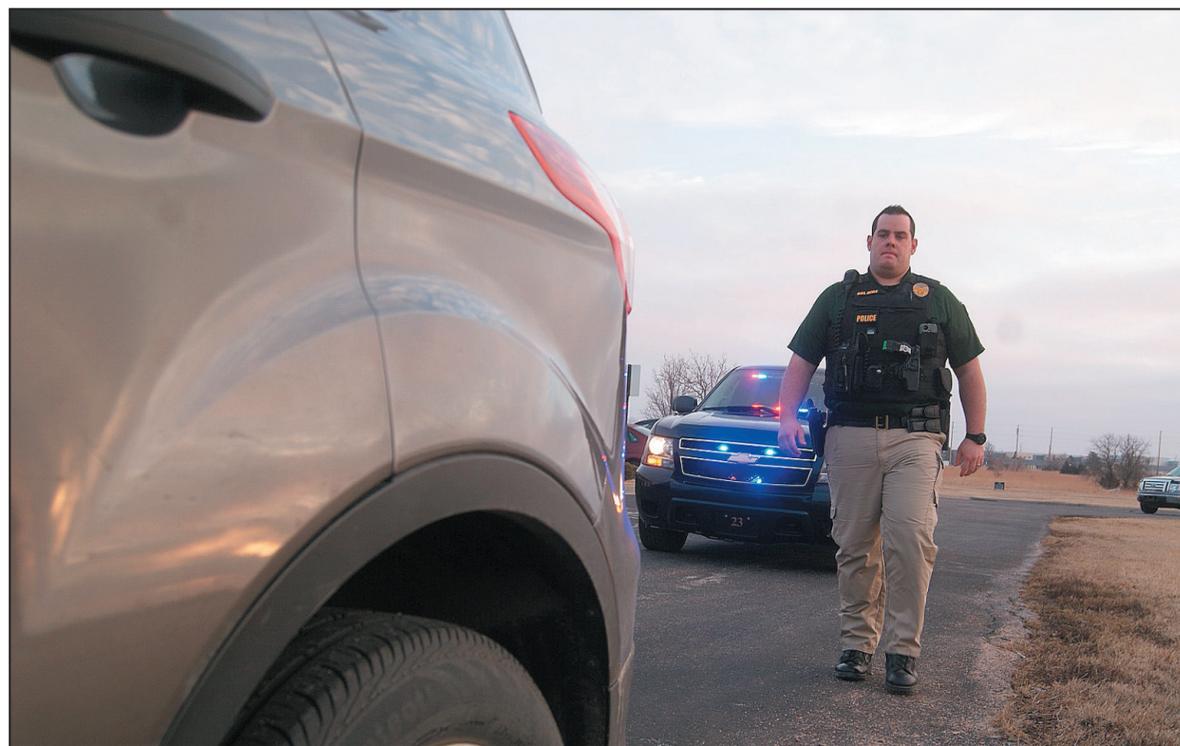


Photo illustration by Matt Heilman

The Bel Aire Police Department has been able to continue its 24-hour patrol despite being undermanned. In 2013, the department investigated 278 cases, almost one-third of which were larcenies to vehicles.

By Matt Heilman

The Bel Aire Police Department has been put to the test. And despite being short-handed, the department is getting by, able to keep up with a call log that has only expanded in the past year.

Recently, the call log included a report of a robbery in the city where officers were able to apprehend suspects soon after the theft and assault occurred.

On Feb. 6, officers made two arrests in connection to the case. Interim Police Chief Troy Griggs said a 19-year-old Bel Aire man and a juvenile teen male were arrested after robbing and assaulting another teenage juvenile male on the side of a street in the city.

The 19-year-old was identified as Samuel Jesus Ponce, of Bel Aire. Griggs said Ponce and

a juvenile suspect had made plans to purchase an Xbox 360 gaming system and some video games from the victim in the case.

The suspects, who knew the victim, met him alongside a street in Bel Aire, Griggs said. Ponce and the juvenile suspect arrived in a vehicle and the younger suspect got out of the vehicle after it stopped where the victim was waiting for them, Griggs said. The teen suspect approached the victim and began examining the Xbox 360 and the games, Griggs said. Then, Ponce allegedly approached the victim and punched him in the face.

Griggs said both suspects then beat the victim before fleeing the area.

Ponce, who fled on foot, was apprehended a short distance from where the crime occurred in the 5300 block of North

Oliver. The juvenile, who drove the vehicle from the scene, was arrested at a residence in Kechi, Griggs said.

In the Feb. 7 daily booking report with the Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office, Ponce's address is listed in the 4300 block of North Eagle Lake in Bel Aire. Griggs said charges against Ponce would be presented in Sedgwick County District Court on Feb. 11. He said the charges against the juvenile were to be presented on Feb. 10.

The robbery is one of the latest crime Bel Aire officers have been able to solve despite the lack of personnel.

The personnel hits have spanned the department from the bottom to the top. Late last year, former Chief John Daily had to step down due to health problems associated with a back injury. Griggs stepped

into the interim chief role after previously serving as a lieutenant for the city.

Griggs' move within the department meant he didn't have as much time to patrol the city with the increased administrative responsibilities.

But even before Daily left and Griggs filled in as interim chief, the department had to put forth extra effort to keep the city patrolled 24-7.

Griggs said Bel Aire currently has five officers that split time between the three shifts. In recent months, the department lost one officer to military leave and another to administrative leave.

Griggs said he couldn't discuss personnel matters and thus couldn't provide an explanation for the administrative leave. The department has been able

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Next phase unveiled for health facility

Progress made at Tierra Verde

By Matt Heilman

A project that was about six years in the making before it finally broke ground is now moving full steam ahead near 47th North and Webb Road.

The planned health and wellness destination resort, called Tierra Verde began last summer with the groundbreaking of the Concierge Surgical Recovery Center and the new clinic home for Dr. George Watson. The recovery center is designed to be a place where patients can recover from surgery with medical assistance available outside of a hospital setting.

On Feb. 18, the Bel Aire City Council received a presentation from Tierra Verde architect Paul Cavanaugh who unveiled plans for the next phase of the development known as the Medical Bed and Breakfast project. On about five acres south of the Concierge Recovery Center, Cavanaugh introduced plans for the construction of 10 housing units for surgical recovery, each consisting of eight single-occupancy bedrooms and two double-occupancy bedrooms.

Each room includes its own ADA-compliant bathroom. The units, known as Homes Plus at Tierra Verde also will include an open living room, a safe room, a sun room, a kitchen with a pantry, a beauty room and a workroom complete with a washer and dryer in each unit.

Bel Aire City Manager Ty Lasher said construction on the first two facilities part of the Medical Bed and Breakfast project is expected to start in the spring. The master plan for Tierra Verde calls for development of three phases including a mix of medical facilities, assisted living facilities, residential units, commercial/retail property and a hotel among several projects.

The Bel Aire council did not take any binding action following Cavanaugh's presentation.

Also on Feb. 18, the council:

- Approved an appropriations ordinance for \$353,402.52.

- Received a presentation from Richelle Knotts with Weigand New Homes about the 2014 marketing proposal for The Landing addition in the Central Park housing community.

- Approved a utility easement for lots in the Sunflower Commerce Park to allow for utility installation.

- Approved the purchase of a used loader for public works for up to \$55,000.

- Approved a 30-day extension to a real estate purchase agreement with Buzzi Unicem.

All five council members and Mayor David Austin were present at the Feb. 18 meeting.

Development plans pushing forward in Bel Aire

By Matt Heilman

The City of Bel Aire is staying busy on the development front and there's no sign of it stopping anytime soon. Last month, in the Sunflower Commerce Park, the city confirmed a rumor that will bring part of a Fortune 100 business to the community and discussed plans for a basketball academy led by a former Wichita State University men's basketball standout. Earlier this month, the Bel Aire

City Council approved a land purchase agreement that is expected to bring more commercial development to the city near 45th North and Rock Road.

The land purchase agreement is with Wichita's C Plus, LLC. Bel Aire City Manager Ty Lasher said the developer is planning to purchase about eight acres.

More than half of the land is in a floodplain, but Lasher said at least two to three acres on the corner of the property is available for construction. On

the five to six acres in the floodplain, he said several options could include the construction of a parking lot or the development of a small park area.

He said there is also the possibility for the developer to pay for work that could make another two to three acres in the floodplain suitable for construction. For now, it's unclear what C Plus LLC has in mind for the property.

Lasher said the land purchase agreement gives the developer a six-month due diligence period to look at the

site and complete some of the front-end work that proceeds development plans, including the completion of an engineering study.

Lasher indicated the location of the site at 45th North and Rock Road is attractive for commercial development, with its proximity to all of the shopping and restaurant options in northeast Wichita.

"(C Plus, LLC) knows there's a good couple to three acres they can build a structure on," Lasher said.

A little north and a mile east of the property in the land purchase agreement, the city is seeing continued progress in the 800-acre Sunflower Commerce Park, stretching along 53rd North from Webb to Greenwich Road.

Last week, Lasher confirmed the identity of a "worldwide distribution company" rumored to operate on 21 acres in the commerce park south of 53rd North and Webb Road. On the

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Mayor's corner

By David Austin

While walking into Century Manufacturing for part two of his Bel Aire tour on Feb. 13, I asked U.S. Congressman Mike Pompeo (R-Kan.) to promise me he'd return to the Sunflower Commerce Park within the year to see how much it will have grown. He agreed. He also said he has no doubt that our industrial park will soon be filled with businesses bringing jobs to the area.

In fact, construction for three buildings should begin very soon. Much has been said about Buzzi Unicem, Jason Perez's Hoops Academy and the Fed Ex distribution facility. And as they say, the excitement is growing.

According to a report to the council from Weignad Real Estate company, Wichita area home sales have now been rising for three straight years since the expiration of the homebuyer tax credit in June 2010. And Bel Aire certainly realized that. In fact, Bel Aire housing starts were up 150% in 2013. At the Landing in Central Park, seven lots were sold in 2013 with four different builders moving dirt and putting up walls as I type this column.

And that is just in one small part of Central Park. New home construction is booming throughout the sub division. This shows our awesome incentives combined with our great community are attracting people.

Bel Aire was a vendor at the 2013 Wichita Area Builder's Association Home Show the first week of February. My wife, Keturah, and I along with Community Development Committee member Jeanette Clement worked the booth for two hours on Friday night. I was happy to visit with so many people during my short time there who told me how much they loved Bel Aire. In fact, one mother asked if I would help her convince her daughter and her husband to move to Bel Aire as they were looking at homes in west Wichita and in south Wichita. I gave her my number and told her to have them give me a call. I didn't think anything about it.

The next morning, the husband called and we had a very pleasant conversation about all things going on and what's available to families in Bel Aire. I shared information on us being the safest community in the area and about our parks, schools, etc. I am happy to report they are now definitely considering Bel Aire as their new home.

I have said it before and I'll say it again. Bel Aire is a great place to live, work and play. And I am happy to share that with anyone who wants to listen. We also visited with a builder who built in Central Park, 10 years ago. He shared with me that he never envisioned building in Bel Aire, but that the excitement is too good right now and he is returning.

Can I brag a little more? I was beyond impressed with our public works department in regards to snow removal. We had a resident tweet about how clear our streets were. Another even sent in an email to our staff. This almost never happens. On Saturday night, after the eight-inches of snowfall, friends picked Keturah and I up for a dinner out. They both almost immediately asked, "How did Bel Aire get to have such clean streets?" As we got in there car, they remarked how bad non-Bel Aire roads were. It is because of a great staff and planning.

Finally, something that warmed my heart and was added to my keep this as a memento pile; I received a hand-written letter (anybody else miss this lost art-form). Anyway, it was from a 7-year old girl detailing why we should add a cross walk on Woodlawn near the city park - not a bad idea at all in my mind. I just loved getting that note and suggestion.

Until next month, thanks for giving me the honor of serving as your mayor. And just like that 7-year-old little girl, if you have suggestions or comments you wish to share with the city council or myself, please don't hesitate to call or email me at 744-2451 or daustin@belaireks.gov.

Glad to see an end to an unworthy bill

For all their talk about freedom from government intervention, our governor and state representatives sure do seem to spend a lot of time worrying about people's personal lives.

I don't believe Valley Center's Steve Huebert, Steve Brunk or the 70 other House representatives in Topeka who voted in support of House Bill 2453 are homophobic or bigoted. I try to see the best in people and I want to believe them when they say that the bill they approved that would have allowed any business to deny service to same-sex couples was due to religions freedom and was not fueled by hate.

The way I understand it, the spirit of the proposed law was to protect wedding-planning businesses including bakers, photographers and decorators from being sued if they didn't feel comfortable working with same-sex couples due to a moral opposition to gay marriage.

Heil on life

By Matt Heilman



But right, wrong or indifferent, people around the country looked down on the Sunflower State for even letting the bill see the light of day.

The way the "religious freedom" bill was interpreted made Kansas look like it was turning back the clock to the 1950s. People saw the bill as nothing more than discrimination against same-sex couples.

And it's just not smart business practice to deny service to anyone based on factors like sexual orientation, especially in small businesses where every transaction is valuable.

Thankfully, the Senate had the sense to put an end to House Bill 2453 before it could reach our governor's desk. I didn't oppose the bill as a civil rights statement or to bash fellow Christians.

I opposed the law because I feel drafting it was a waste of time and if nothing else, it was terribly communicated.

The way it was interpreted made it sound like an attack on a group of people for how they live.

If the goal is to protect the sanctity of marriage through legislation, I wonder if our governor would be on board if I recommended an anti-discrimination protection bill that would allow businesses to deny service to people known to be cheating on their significant others or are abusive in their relationships.

I love the State of Kansas and I respect those who are willing to answer the call to represent us in Topeka. But when our representa-

tives put their own interests ahead of what's best for the state or make the entire state look bad with an unworthy bill, it's frustrating to say the least.

I'm glad House Bill 2453 didn't reach the governor's desk. And I hope the conversation in Topeka stays fixed on ways to make our state better.

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The Bel Aire Breeze

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Police

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to hire two new officers in recent months, but the officers are in training and haven't yet reached the point where they can be sent off on patrols in the city. Griggs said the city is also in the process of accepting applications for its next police chief.

He said he doesn't have a timetable for when the city would hire a

new chief.

"We're addressing our manpower issues," Griggs said.

And while doing so, Bel Aire officers have dealt with an increased crime log. Griggs said his department investigated 278 cases in 2013, up from 193 in 2012. It handled the increase without a detective on staff.

Of the cases investigated in 2013, Griggs said almost one-third were larcenies to vehicles. He said the number of larcenies to vehicles

jumped to 83 cases last year, up from 41 in 2012.

"There's a lot of factors," Griggs said. "I think the biggest factor is economic. People are out of work and they're desperate."

He mentioned less available officers on the street as another possible factor for the increased larcenies. But he said the officers that have been on duty have kept a pulse on the city.

Griggs said officers have identified seven suspects on one of the

larceny cases, which could solve several others.

"It just goes to show you some of these cases spiral out of control," Griggs said. "Multiple suspects emerge, requiring an in-depth investigation."

With a small staff and no detective, officers have been called on to do more in conducting those investigations.

"But we're doing the best we can with what we've got," Griggs said.

Housing

Continued from Page 1

Immediate plans in the city also call for the construction of an apartment complex neighboring Northeast Magnet High School near 53rd North and Rock Road.

Along with the increased demand for multi-family homes, Lasher said he's noticed more interest in higher end single-family homes that start around \$250,000.

In Park City, City Administrator Jack Whitson said he's also noticed more interest in the higher price ranges. The trend bodes well for Park City as it looks to sell more lots in its housing developments just northeast of Valley Center.

In August, the city took ownership of between 120 and 130 vacant lots in two developments at a pair of sheriff's sales. The city council has since been working to establish how best to market the properties to collect what's owed in property taxes and special assessments.

The vacant lots include 70 lots in the Bear Hill addition near 85th North and Hydraulic and between 50 and 60 lots in the Saddlebrook addition near 85th North and Broadway.

The marketing strategy includes the city offering up to a \$15,000 incentive in Bear Hill and up to a \$10,000 incentive in Saddlebrook. The city planned to sell the lots for \$20,000 in Bear Hill and \$15,000 in Saddlebrook.

So far, Whitson said the city has been able to sell lots in Bear Hill, where two houses are being built. He said one house is being built in Saddlebrook and another lot has sold.

Following Park City's participation in the Wichita Area Builder's Association Home Show earlier this month, Whitson said he's received seven inquiries about available lots for home construction.

He said all of the questions were for Bear Hill, where homes sell in the \$250,000 to \$500,000 range. Whitson said while the focus has been on Bear Hill and Saddlebrook, there are other developments throughout the city that are being marketed. Last year, he said

about 15 new homes sold in Park City. "Hopefully, it will kind of pick up," Whitson said.

In Valley Center, Community Development Director Warrant Utecht said the city had 10 housing starts in 2013, up from just three in 2012, but down from the 2011 mark.

"It's been up and down over the last few years," he said.

But Utecht indicated an overall upward trend is anticipated to continue. Like Bel Aire, Valley Center has seen an increased demand for multi-family homes as well as higher end properties upwards of \$200,000.

In the Valley Creek Estates addition, Utecht said Brad and Sean Isham are continuing the development of duplexes and triplexes. The multi-family homes are being built on Poplar Court, which will total 13 units, Utecht said.

Poplar Court, located west of Sheridan is just off Cottonwood Court, where the Ishams completed most of their multi-family construction last year.

On the single-family construction front, Utecht said there remain just

10 undeveloped lots in Valley Creek Estates. He said there is potential for home construction on 23 lots in the west end addition, based on what's been platted.

"Otherwise, we've already issued some permits this year in Valley Creek," Utecht said.

In the Ritchfield development north of West Elementary and Fifth Street between Interurban and Kessler, Utecht said there are 57 single-family lots. Plans for the development call for the addition of about 38 duplexes and triplexes.

Utecht indicated Valley Center still has plenty of room for growth once new home starts pop up on all of the city's available lots for construction. Plans call for another apartment complex to be constructed near a future 60-acre detention pond on city property south of Ford Street.

The most potential property Utecht mentioned was in the Prairie Lakes addition accessible off Ford Street. Utecht said the development is platted from about Meridian all the way to Seneca, including 145 potential lots.

Business

Continued from Page 1

land owned by Madison, Wis.-based developer, Ruedebusch Development & Construction, FedEx Ground is planning to build a new distribution center.

In an emailed statement, FedEx Ground spokeswoman Allison Houser said the distribution center will be approximately 180,000 square feet when it is completed in July 2015.

"The new facility will replace an existing facility nearby, allowing us to continue to meet and exceed customer demands in the region," Houser said. "When the new facility opens, positions will transfer from the existing station, and we will add to the workforce as necessary to support increased demand for service in the area."

Houser said FedEx Ground chose the site in the Sunflower Commerce Park "due to ease of access to major highways, proximity to customers' distribution centers, and a strong local community workforce for recruiting employees."

Lasher said FedEx has already broken ground on the site, but the company doesn't wish to have a formal groundbreaking ceremony.

Just north of the future distribution center, former Wichita State University Shocker basketball standout and member of the Pizza Hut Shocker Sports Hall of Fame, Jason Perez is moving forward with his plans to expand a basketball academy he started four years ago called The Next Level Hoops Academy.

Lasher said Perez had his first meeting with city officials last week, two months after announcing his plans to build in the Sunflower Commerce Park. Perez confirmed that Next Level Hoops Academy is purchasing a six-acre site.

The two lots on the property will include six basketball courts for league play, tournaments and practices, as well as a strength and conditioning facility, Perez said.

Perez, who played for the Shockers from 1996 to 2000, started the Next Level Hoops Academy in 2010. He played professionally in Europe prior to settling in Wichita and starting the

academy.

Next Level Hoops Academy leads basketball camps, clinics, group training and one-on-one training sessions. A December 6 press release on the plans for Next Level Hoops Academy's move to Bel Aire said the academy started with five teams in 2010 and has expanded to nearly 30 teams.

Next Level Hoops Academy also has its own AAU organization where top teams travel to compete at tournaments across the country. Perez said the academy includes participants from first grade through high school.

Perez said most of Next Level Hoops Academy's clientele is on the east side of Wichita and the property in the Sunflower Commerce Park had the price and location he was looking for. Perez said he believes the entire northeast quadrant, including Bel Aire, could be developed in five to 10 years.

"I'm excited to be part of that," he said.

Perez said he does not yet have a timetable on when ground would break on the new home for the Next Level Hoops Academy.

Elsewhere in the Sunflower Commerce Park, Buzzi Unicem USA, a cement-manufacturing company, and Wichita's Shuttle Aerospace are still planning to build on the property. Buzzi Unicem is planning to build on 12 acres at 53rd North and Greenwich. The company will have the shipping capabilities it needs, with the presence of railroad siding that will run off the main Union Pacific line.

Shuttle Aerospace, a Wichita-based aircraft parts manufacturer, is looking to build on about eight acres at the southwest corner of 53rd North and Webb Road. The company also has an option to purchase six additional acres adjacent to the eight acres in its purchase agreement with Bel Aire.

For now, Century Manufacturing stands as the only business operating in the Sunflower Commerce Park. The company that specializes in manufacturing acrylic and transparent promotional materials and awards, has been operating in its 36,000-square-foot facility on its three-acre site near 53rd North and Webb Road since January 2013.

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City of Bel Aire



Bel Aire Recreation

HELP WANTED

The City of Bel Aire is accepting applications for Youth Dance Instructors, Baseball/Softball Umpires and Lifeguards. These are seasonal part-time positions. Apply at the Bel Aire Recreation Center, 5251 E. 48th North.

SPRING BREAK BASKETBALL CAMP

Former collegiate player and current coach Brent Atwater bring you the TMK Spring Basketball Camp. The camp is a coed activity for ages 5-11. Spring Break Camp will be held from March 17th through March 20th; 9am-12pm. Space is limited therefore pre-registration is required.

SPRING BREAK SPORTS WEEK

Traditional and non-traditional activities such as track & field, kickball, corn bag toss, tetherball, pool, foosball, and bolo. The schedule will change in case of inclement weather. Please dress in comfortable attire and accordingly. Space is limited therefore pre-registration is required. Sports week will be held from March 17th through March 20th; ages 5-7 will begin at 1:00pm and ages 8-11 will begin at 2:00pm.

SHORT SPORTS

This coed instructional program for three year olds will teach basic sports skills including throwing, catching, kicking, and batting. Space is limited therefore pre-registration is required. All registrants must be accompanied by an adult at each session. Short Sports will meet Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6:30-7:00pm beginning on Tuesday, April 23rd and coming to a completion on Thursday, May 9th.

A \$5 late fee will be charged to all sign-ups after the deadline. For more information on these or any Bel Aire Recreation Programs call 744-2700

BLASTBALL

Blastball is an introductory coed T-Ball program for four year olds. Games will be held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings beginning on Tuesday, April 15th and coming to a completion on Thursday, May 9th. The registration deadline is March 29th.

RECREATIONAL SUMMER BALL LEAGUES

(boys ages 5-11 & girls ages 5-12) Teams will play up to two games per week on Monday, Tuesday, & Thursday evening, or Saturdays beginning June 2nd. Leagues include T-Ball, Machine Pitch and Youth Pitch Baseball & Softball. The registration deadline is April 26th.

TAEKWONDO (ages 5 & up)

Classes meet on Monday & Friday from 5:00-6:00pm or Tuesday & Thursday from 7:10-8:10pm. These are great classes for beginners to black belts.

YOGA

Classes are held on Mondays and Wednesdays from 6:10-7:10 pm. Participants need to provide their own yoga mat. Adults can join at any time! Teens & adults can join at any time!

FITNESS CENTER (ages 16 & up)

The Fitness Center consists of elliptical cross trainers, treadmills, recumbent bike, multi-station weight machine, and free-weights. There is no charge for pass holders, or it is available with the purchase of a daily pass.

applied to lawns and gardens wash off and pollute, grass clippings and leaves can and do wash into the storm drains and add organic matter to the ponds and streams.

- When use of fertilizers and pesticides are necessary, use these chemicals in the recommended amounts.
- Pet waste can be a major source of bacteria that wash into the drainage system and eventually into the local waters, clean up after your pets.
- When walking your pet, please remember to pick up after them and dispose of it properly. Flushing the pet waste is the best method to dispose of it.

- Sweep up yard debris rather than hosing down the areas. Compost your yard waste and grass clippings.
- Use a commercial car wash or wash your car on the lawn or other unpaved surface.

Stormwater Pollution

What is stormwater pollution? As stated on the EPA National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) website,

Stormwater discharges are primarily generated by: paved streets, parking lots and building roof tops during rainfall and snow events.

Stormwater runoff is generated when precipitation from rain and snow-melt events flows over land or impervious surfaces and does not percolate into the ground. As the runoff flows over the land or impervious surfaces (paved streets, parking lots, and building rooftops), it accumulates debris, chemicals, sediment or other pollutants that could adversely affect water quality if the runoff is discharged untreated. The primary method to control stormwater discharges is the use of best management practices (BMP's).

Q. Why is stormwater runoff a problem?

A. Stormwater or runoff can pick up all kinds of debris, such as chemicals, dirt, litter and many other pollutants as it flows through the stormwater system or directly into a body of water like the neighbor pond or stream. After it enters the stormwater system it is discharged untreated into the bodies of water, the same water that's used for drinking, swimming and fishing.

Q. Is there something I can do on my property to help control the runoff?

A. Yes, there are things that can be done such as: landscaping, recycle & dispose of properly.

- Don't overwater your lawn, don't create runoff, consider a soaker hose instead of a sprinkler.
- Excess fertilizers and pesticides



The City of Bel Aire was pleased to have Representative Mike Pompeo visit Bel Aire and the Sunflower Commerce Park on February 13th. During his stay in Bel Aire, Representative Pompeo toured Wickham Glass and Century Manufacturing. The visit highlighted the city's growth efforts, while allowing business and city leaders to share the challenges that business and local government's face



Sunrise Christian Academy held a mock City Council at City hall on February 13th. High school students living in Bel Aire who are interested in serving on our Mayor's Youth Council, please contact Rick Rekoske at 744-2451 ext 218 or rrekoske@belaireks.gov for more information!



Broadstone Villas construction going in along Lycee by the High School, north of 53rd and west of the High School

Save the Date

Spring is coming and so is the Annual Bel Aire Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 12th at 10:00 AM! The Bel Aire Lions Club is sponsoring the event and will hold egg hunt for different age groups for kids — 1-3, 4-6, 7-8, and 9-10. The event will take place at City Hall, 7651 E. Central Park Avenue. Bring the entire family and enjoy the day filled with candy!

May 3rd-Shredding and Electronic Recycling day
June 12-14-Bel Aire City Wide Garage Sale
June 28th-Community Cleanup Day

Bel Aire Seniors

All SENIORS 55+ are cordially invited to all events listed below. The Senior Center and Library area are open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday excluding holidays. The library has a wide selection of library books to check out at no cost nor time restraints, along with computers available for study or research. Remember any senior can belong or attend to more than one senior center/club in Sedgwick County.

Locations:

Senior Center/Community Room – 7651 E. Central Park Ave., 744-2451
Recreation Center – 5251 E. 48th St. N., 744-2700

Weekly Events:

- Bel Aire Walkers** – M-F, 8-9 a.m. at the Rec Center (indoors & climate controlled) Free for BA Senior members, alternate times available
- Men's Coffee & Fellowship** – Mondays, 10 a.m. at the Senior Center
- Yoga** – Mondays & Wednesdays, 6 p.m. at the Rec Center (monthly fee)
- Bridge Games** – Tuesdays, 1 p.m. at the Senior Center
- Low Impact Aerobics** – Wednesdays, 9 a.m. at the Rec Center
- Braum's Breakfast** – Fridays, 9 a.m. on North Rock Road

Monthly & Special Events:

- March 2-7** Bring your old stuff in this week & donate to Homeless
- March 3, 6:30 p.m.** – Potluck Dinner – John Boldenow, "Antique Appraising" – Community Room
- March 4 8:30 a.m.** – Breakfast at Denny's
- March 5 10 a.m.** – Volunteer library work time at the Senior Center
- March 5 11 a.m.** – Zhanna Pataky, "The Benefits of Acupuncture" at the Senior Center
- March 10 9:30 a.m.** - Yoder Parade of Quilts, Carpool departs Senior Center
- March 10 11:30 a.m.** – Lunch at Olive Garden
- March 12 10 a.m.** – Open Sewing at the Senior Center
- March 18** – Ladies Dine Out - for info call Anita at 744-2840
- March 19 10 a.m.** – Men's Coffee at Braums
- March 19 10:15 a.m.** – Senior Aerobics Brunch (different locations)
- March 19 2 p.m.** – Ladies Coffee/Tea at Braums
- March 24 12:30 p.m.** – Covered Dish Dinner, Solar Energy, Mark Horst speaker, Rec Center
- March 26** – Alzheimer's Education Conference & Health Fair, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., Senior Center/Community Room
- March 26 7 p.m.** – Bunko games at the Senior Center
- March 27** – Rite Bite Series, Carbs & Fiber Friend or Foe, Denise Diaz, Senior Center
- April 7 6:30 p.m.** – Potluck Dinner – Doll Presentation, Earlene Endicott

Community Events

- TOPS** – Tuesdays, 9 a.m. at the Senior Center
- City Council Meetings** – 1st & 3rd Tuesdays of every month
- March 5 12 p.m.** – Chamber of Commerce Meeting
- March 10** – Bel Aire Heights HOA Meeting at the Community Room
- March 10** – Central Park HOA meeting at the Senior Center
- March 13 11:15 a.m.** - Red Hat lunch and games, Senior Center, call Anita for more info 744-2840.
- March 18 4 p.m.** – UAC Meeting
- March 24 7 p.m.** – Tree Board Meeting at the Senior Center

TALENT SHOW WINNER RETURNING TO BEL AIRE



The City of Bel Aire and Bob & Luigi's Pizza are pleased to announce the winner of last year's Bel Aire Talent Show is returning to Bel Aire for a special performance on March 22nd from 6:00-9:00 PM. At Bob & Luigi's there is no cost to come and hear the winner of last year's contest winner, 10 year old Carson Kilpatrick. We invite anyone that would like to experience his incredible talent again and for those that missed the performance last year, you will be in for a real treat!

FedEx



The City of Bel Aire completed the sale of about 20 acres of land in its Sunflower Commerce Park to a company that is a developer for FedEx Ground, which plans a roughly 180,000-square-foot distribution facility there.

City Hall

- Ty Lasher, City Manager 744-2451, ext. 217
- Recreation Department 744-2700
- Central Park Pool 744-7331
- Parks Department 744-8609
- Police • Emergency 911
- Non-emergency 744-6000
- Animal Control (Sedgwick County) 660-7070
- Public Works 744-2888
- Water/Sewer Emergency (after 5 p.m.) 761-6972 or 761-6973
- Utility Billing 744-2451, ext. 132
- (Waste Connections) 838-4920
- Hazardous Waste (Sedgwick County) 660-7464

POLICE REPORTS

Feb. 20 — Officer Camplin took a report from a resident who was afraid her home would be burglarized by two people she made contact with in Wichita. Extra patrol was requested.

Feb. 20 — Officer Camplin observed a vehicle illegally parked on a sidewalk in the 4500 block of St. James. Officer placed a tow sticker on the vehicle. Later, the officer noticed the tow sticker had been removed but the vehicle was still illegally parked. Officer issued a parking citation.

Feb. 20 — Officer Thompson responded to a 911 hang-up call in the 4900 block of Willow Point Court. There was no trouble.

Feb. 19 — Chief Griggs responded to a report of vandalism in the 5300 block of North Rock Springs. Nickole L. Kircher was arrested on a charge of criminal damage to property.

Feb. 19 — Chief Griggs took a report of arson at Denise Park in the 5800 block of East Denise. A city employee reported that unknown suspects set playground equipment on fire, causing about \$1,500 in damage.

Feb. 19 — Officer Thompson responded to a two-vehicle wreck in the 5200 block of North Woodlawn. A vehicle's mirror struck the swinging stop sign on a school bus. The vehicle left the scene.

Feb. 19 — Officer McCaslin responded to an alarm in the 6600 block of East Summerside Place. It was a false alarm.

Feb. 17 — Officer Camplin responded to a disturbance with a weapon and shots fired at 9600 K-254. Wichita police had detained the suspects.

Feb. 16 — Officer Camplin observed a vehicle on a curb at 37th North and Hillcrest. The driver was having a seizure. She was taken to the hospital.

Feb. 16 — Officer Roney re-

sponded to a burglary alarm in the 4800 block of North Farmstead. There were no signs of suspicious activity.

Feb. 15 — Officer Camplin responded to a two-vehicle wreck in the 4800 block of East 37th North. A driver was cited for failing to stop at a stop light and no proof of insurance. No injuries were reported.

Feb. 15 — Officer Thompson took a burglary report in the 5900 block of East Memphis. Taken were three TVs, a laptop, a karaoke player, a tablet, a Blue Ray player and Cox cable box. The victim said a known person may have taken the items and staged a burglary.

Feb. 14 — Officer Roney responded to a traffic accident at 45th North and Oliver. One of the drivers, Spencer C. Diaz, was arrested on charges of DUI, inattentive driving and no liability insurance.

Feb. 12 — Officer McCaslin responded to a two-vehicle wreck in the 4600 block of North Hedgerow. Minor damage was reported. There were no injuries.

Feb. 12 — Officer McCaslin responded to a report of suspicious characters in the 4800 block of East Willow Point.

Feb. 11 — Chief Griggs observed a man and a woman standing in the road next to a parked vehicle in the 4300 block of North Country Lane. The suspects acted as if they were preparing to enter the parked vehicle, but left when they saw the officer's vehicle.

Feb. 11 — Chief Griggs responded to a report of two vicious dogs in the area of a residence in the 5800 block of North Rock Spring. The dogs were at a house under construction. Sedgwick County Animal Control responded and captured one of the dogs. The other dog avoided capture.

Feb. 10 — Officer Camplin responded to an alarm on a residence in the 5800 block of East Perryton.

Feb. 11 — Chief Griggs responded to a burglary alarm in the 4800 block of North Farmstead. There were no signs of suspicious activity.

Feb. 10 — Officer Murphy responded to check a residence in the 4300 block of Rushwood Circle, where the calling party discovered several footprints in the snow around her house. The prints indicated that someone had walked a dog near the back of the house next to a wooded area.

Feb. 8 — Officer Camplin responded to a vandalism report in the 5500 block of East Falcon Lane. A resident said an unidentified vehicle drove into her yard.

Feb. 7 — Chief Griggs responded to a larceny report in the 3800 block of North Woodlawn. The U.S. Postal Service reported that someone pried open the door of a large Postal Service mailbox near Chisholm Trail State Bank. The mail carrier said the mailbox is usually full, and there were just a few items of mail still in the box. The suspects took unknown parcels of mail.

Feb. 7 — Officer McCaslin responded to a dog at-large in the 5000 block of East 48th North. The dog could not be located.

Feb. 6 — Officer McCaslin took a report of a dog at-large in the 4200 block of North Janesville. The dog was captured and returned to the owner's fenced yard.

Feb. 6 — Officer McCaslin responded to an alarm on a business in the 3800 block of North Hillcrest. The alarm was deemed false.

Feb. 5 — Officer Foxx assisted the sheriff's officer in serving a felony warrant in the 4600 block of East Falcon.

Feb. 5 — Officer Foxx checked compliance of a city code violation in the 4800 block of North Woodlawn.

Feb. 4 — Officer Foxx responded to check the welfare of a small child crying at a residence in the 5900 block of East Clarendon. The 15-month-old boy was throwing a tantrum.

Feb. 3 — Officer Murphy re-

sponded to a two-vehicle wreck in the 4000 block of North Woodlawn. A driver was cited for inattentive driving. No injuries were reported.

Feb. 2 — Officer Murphy responded to a report of a suspicious vehicle in the 5000 block of North 49th Court. The owner of the vehicle responded and was told to move the vehicle.

Feb. 1 — Officer Murphy responded to a rollover wreck in the 5500 block of North Rock Road. A vehicle hit a patch of ice and overturned. There were no injuries.

Feb. 1 — Officer McCaslin responded to a found property call in the 5100 block of East 46th North. A woman reported finding jewelry in her home while she was cleaning. The jewelry belonged to the woman, who has a history of memory loss.

Feb. 1 — Officer Thompson checked a possibly stolen vehicle in the 6100 block of East 41st North Court. The vehicle was registered to the Islamic Society of Wichita. The previous owner donated the vehicle to the group.

Jan. 31 — Officer McCaslin observed a discarded chair in the ditch in the 9000 block of East 53rd North.

Jan. 30 — Officer McCaslin responded to a possible break-in in the 400 block of North Clarendon. Officer determined a break-in did not occur.

Jan. 30 — Chief Griggs responded to an alarm on a residence in the 4100 block of North Danbury. There was no emergency.

Jan. 29 — Officer McCaslin responded to a burglary in the 6900 block of East Odessa Court. A Nike golf bag and golf clubs were taken from a garage. Loss was estimated at \$1,200.

Jan. 27 — Officer Foxx responded to a possible shooting at Bob & Luigi's at 45th North and Woodlawn. The owner, James E. Green, was attempting to load his pistol inside the

Contemporary Sunday worship services at 8 and 10:30 a.m. Communion on the first and third Sunday. Adult Sunday school and Bible class meet at 9:15 a.m. Children's church at 10:30. A nursery is provided during Bible class and second service.

The Ash Wednesday Worship Service will be March 5 from 7:30 - 8:15 p.m. with Holy Communion and Imposition of Ashes.

The Lenten Services will be on Wednesdays, March 12, 19, 26, April 2 and April 9 from 7:30 - 8:00 p.m.

During the Lenten Season, the Wednesday Evening Ministries is from 6:30 to 7:20 p.m. with activities for all ages. A nursery will be available for preschool-age children.

Kings' Kids for children in kindergarten through fifth grade. Confirmation class for children grades six through eight. IMPACT! is for grades nine through twelve. There will also be adult Bible classes. Please join us!

The church is located at 6770 E. 34th North in Wichita. The phone number is 683-5538. www.risensav-norwichita.net.

Senior pastor is Tom Harmon.

St. Michael's Orthodox Christian Church
Saint Michael's Orthodox Christian Church is located at 2710 E. 61st North, Park City, KS 67219. It is a congregation of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America. "...the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch." Acts 11:26

On Sunday at 9 a.m. is our adult class, "The Story of Christianity." Service of Matins is at 9:45 a.m. fol-

lowed by the Divine Liturgy (Mass) at 10. Nursery service is provided. On Wednesday our service is at 6 p.m. On Saturday Vespers is at 4:30 p.m.

Men's Study Group first and third Monday at 7 p.m. We are studying the Gospel of Luke.

Women's Study Group second and fourth Friday at 10 a.m. Dare To Live Fully Right Where You Are. We will continue our study of "One Thousand Gifts" by Ann Voskamp.

Wednesday Potluck Supper & Program "When a Nation Forgets God" Feb. 19. "That Which is Legal Might Also Be Evil." Liturgy 6 p.m. Supper 6:45. Program 7:30. All are welcome.

Catechism Class: Saturdays at 3 p.m. Those who are interested in learning about the Orthodox Church are most welcome to join us.

Holy Days for February: Feb. 22 Chair of St. Peter at Antioch, Feb. 24 Saint Matthias the Apostle, Feb. 27 Saint Raphael of Brooklyn. Season of Pre-Lent begins on Feb. 16. March 5 is Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Great Lent.

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Wichita Three Angels Seventh-Day Adventist Church
The church is located at 4558 N. Hydraulic Wichita, KS 67219. The pastor is Nathan Stearman. The Sabbath school is at 9:30 a.m. Worship service is at 11:00 a.m.

For more information find us at www.godsclot.com or on Facebook, email eric@godsclot.com, or call 530-1040.

Send your church's upcoming events and service times to legals@arkvalleynews.com or call 755-0821.

CHURCH HIGHLIGHTS

Christ Lutheran Church

Christ Lutheran is located at 53rd Street North and Hillside, across from Wichita Heights High School. Services are at 8:30 a.m. (Contemporary), 9:45 a.m. (Kid Friendly) and 11:00 a.m. (Traditional). Communion is offered at all services. Adult Sunday School is at 9:45 a.m.

Ash Wednesday services will be held on March 5 at 7:00 p.m. On Wednesday evenings through Lent, March 12 through April 9, a potluck supper will begin at 6:15 p.m., followed by a Lenten worship service at 7:00 p.m. During Holy Week Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services will be held at 7:00 p.m. Easter Sunday services will be at 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Children's activities and a breakfast will be offered between services.

For more information about the church and its activities find the church online at www.christ-lutheran.org., or call 744-1242. Pastor Chad Langdon is the minister of Christ Lutheran Church.

Church of the Resurrection

Church of the Resurrection (Roman Catholic) is located at 4910 N. Woodlawn in Bel Aire.

Masses for the Lord's Day are 5:30 p.m. Saturday and 8:30 and 11 a.m. Sunday. Weekday Masses are 8 a.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday; also at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday.

Resurrection Catholic School has students from preschool through eighth grade.

The parish/school website is www.resurrectionwichita.com. Phone number is 744-2776. Rev. James F. Weldon is the pastor.

Community Bible Chapel

The church is located at 4551 Auburn, south of 45th North between Oliver and Woodlawn, in Bel Aire.

Worship service and breaking of the bread are at 9 a.m., with Bible study and Sunday school at 10:30 on Sundays.

Wednesday prayer and Bible study are at 7 p.m.

For more information, call Melvan Adair at 744-7091.

Fairmount United Church of Christ

The church welcomes a new minister, Rev. Larry Young.

Visit the newly renovated building at 1605 Fairmount in Wichita (one block south and one block east

of Hillside and 17th North).

Sunday worship is at 10:30 a.m. which includes children's church. Sunday school begins at 9:30.

For more information, call 682-1597 or visit at www.fairmountucc.org.

Gospel Assembly Church

Located at 4230 N. Oliver in Bel Aire, service times are 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. Sunday. Prayer service is 7 p.m. Tuesday. Praise and worship is 7:30 p.m. Wednesday. The first Saturday evening of each month are youth activities.

Phone number is 744-1502. Rev. Gary D. Green is the pastor.

Greenwich United Methodist Church

Sunday worship service at 9 a.m. Fellowship and coffee follow the service.

Pastor Jeff Miller can be reached at 744-0203.

Senior Day first Tuesday of each month at 10 a.m.

United Methodist Women meet the first Thursday of each month at 1 p.m.

Movie night is the second Saturday of each month at 6:30 p.m. A snack is served.

The church is located about a mile south of K-254 on Greenwich Road. The phone number is 744-0203.

Kechi United Methodist Church

You are welcome at Kechi United Methodist Church, 4533 E. 61st North in Kechi. The contemporary service is at 9:03 a.m. and traditional service is at 11:00 a.m. on Sundays. All are invited to celebrate in

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Fasting during January: All Fridays are days of fasting and abstinence.

Call the church for more information, 734-6248, or visit www.stmichaeloc.org. Email inquiries to jflora@cox.net.

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Send your church's upcoming events and service times to legals@arkvalleynews.com or call 755-0821.

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Bel Aire Breeze

www.arkvalleynews.com

City council clears air concerning water rights

By Matt Heilman

On the surface, the recommendation might have seemed unsettling. But really, the legal counsel said, it was nothing that hadn't already been done or would present new challenges.

Before the Bel Aire City Council at its Feb. 5 meeting was an agenda item that called for the city to give up its water rights to the Chisholm Creek Utility Authority, the water and sewer treatment facility co-owned by Park City and Bel Aire.

Bel Aire City Attorney Allison Brown said that the wording in the recommendation was worse than what was actually being requested. She explained that both Park City and Bel Aire had already officially

yielded water rights to the CCUA when the CCUA was established in 2002. The only thing the recommended action on Feb. 5 would do is make the already completed transfer of water rights official according to the state, she said.

"Technically, this is already done, but we have to take more of an assertive action to comply with state law," Brown said.

The action had already been taken by Park City.

Brown said the agreement to yield water rights to the CCUA does not transfer any land or personal property owned by the City of Bel Aire.

"The right to draw water out of the ground is separate from the ground itself," she said.

With the understanding that Bel Aire wasn't sacrificing

anything new or committing itself to any additional burdens, the motion to yield the water rights to the CCUA was unanimously approved by the five-member council.

When the CCUA was established about 12 years ago, a six-member board was put in place, consisting of three representatives each from Park City and Bel Aire.

Council members Ken Lee and Peggy O'Donnell and Mayor David Austin currently serve Bel Aire on the CCUA board.

On Feb. 5, council member Guy MacDonald expressed concern with Bel Aire's perceived lack of control with its water rights, which he feared could lead to problems down the road.

"I'm concerned (because)

water is a very valuable commodity and it's going to be a much, much more valuable commodity, 10, 20, 30 years into the future. And I was concerned that Bel Aire was giving up rights to an extremely valuable asset," MacDonald said.

Lee said the structure of the CCUA board assures that Bel Aire has a say in any decisions that are made by the board. In 2012, the CCUA board was able to resolve a disagreement over water use between Bel Aire and Park City before the conflict was taken to court.

What it came down to was that the City of Bel Aire thought the original agreement in the CCUA should've been updated. The agreement approved with the establishment of the CCUA in 2002 called for Bel Aire and Park City to

each pay for half of the water supplied by the CCUA.

At the time, that made sense because both cities used close to half the amount supplied. But, with concerns about the CCUA's long-term stability, Bel Aire also approved a take-or-pay agreement with the City of Wichita from which it now gets about 70 percent of its water.

For receiving less than half of the water, the city's representation on the CCUA felt that Bel Aire shouldn't have to pay for more than it uses.

On the other hand, Park City didn't think it was fair to ask its residents to subsidize Bel Aire and pay for the water it didn't use.

Ultimately, the cities ironed out a water allocation agreement where Bel Aire continues

to take 50 percent of water from the CCUA, but sells what it doesn't use to Park City. The agreement also limits Bel Aire to use about one-third of the water provided by the CCUA, more accurately reflecting its actual need.

In the long haul, representatives from both cities seemed to agree the compromise was a win-win for both cities.

"The one thing we have going for us is that, I think, with the way the CCUA is structured, Bel Aire will always have significant representation in any decisions that are made with the CCUA," Lee said. "So, there wouldn't be any decisions made that we weren't fully aware of long in advance and have a significant participation in the making of those decisions."

Democracy in action

Sunrise Christian Academy students gathered at Bel Aire City Hall Feb. 13 to learn about local government through participation in a mock city council. Students that were sworn in during the exercise were Mayor Katriana Kisner and council members Chad Armstrong, Grant Conrady, Miranda White, Nathan Kampe and Berk Orhon.

Courtesy photo



Sunrise basketball remains in elite company

By Matt Heilman

The low-key basketball powerhouse that is the Sunrise Christian Academy Elite or "Maroon" team has seen its mix of ups and downs in another season that has sent the Buffaloes across the country to take on some of the best high school talent in the nation.

Among its travels this season, Sunrise competed at the CYM Shootout Feb. 15 and 16 in Irving, Texas, following strong showings at the Flying to the Hoop showcase event in Dayton, Ohio, and the Penny Hardaway Hoopfest in Memphis earlier in the year. In Ohio, Sunrise coach Kyle Lindsted said his team played poorly in a loss to Thurgood Marshall out of Dayton before rebounding to defeat a team from Wilmington, N.C.

In Memphis, the Buffaloes got their first exposure on national television this year. In a Jan. 25 game on ESPNU, Sunrise lost 46-43 to Arlington County Day, one of the top teams in Texas. On Jan. 23, Lindsted said his team gave up a big lead in a 66-65 loss to Memphis' White Station, currently ranked in the top five nationally.

Sunrise started the year strong, including a Tournament of Champions title in Peoria, Ill., over the Thanksgiving weekend. The team also won a Signature Series title in the City of Palms, Fla., in December.

At the Signature Series, the Buffaloes defeated Brewster (Fla.) Academy, then the nation's No. 1 Prep team in the nation by 15 points.

Lindsted said his team, which has been ranked as

high as No. 6 nationally among high school teams this season, has a contract with ESPN for four years. Lindsted said the contract essentially lumps his team in with the best high school and prep teams across the nation and puts the Buffaloes in consideration each year for an invitation to a national high school showcase that airs on ESPN at the end of the season. Last year, Sunrise narrowly missed the cut to be one of the eight teams featured in the showcase.

Sunrise's top varsity traveling team primarily consists of international players who attend classes at the small private school in Bel Aire. Sunrise also has a strong prep team that is one of the stronger teams nationally and a team of mostly local students that plays most of its games closer to home.

"They're all regular high school kids," Lindsted said.

This year's group includes four players who signed their letters of intent in November to play at the NCAA Division I level next year.

From the traveling Maroon team, guard Lourawls "Tum Tum" Nairn signed a letter of intent to play for Tom Izzo at Michigan State. His teammate and fellow Bahamian Nathan Bain signed with Colorado State, and Rauno Nurger of Estonia signed with the Uni-

versity of Mississippi.

From the school's prep squad, Zachary Brown, a 6-7 guard from Houston, signed with Wichita State.

At the next level, Bahamas native Buddy Hield has been

the Sunrise alum that has stood out most this season. Hield has broken through in his sophomore season at the University of Oklahoma, leading the Sooners in scoring at 16.7 points per game.



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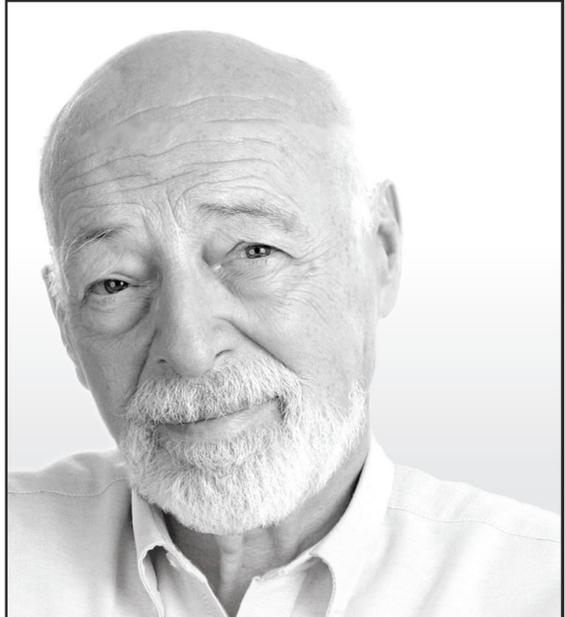
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B West of Meridian & between 5th and 77th Out of town West of Meridian & between 5th / 85th & 77th	E East of Meridian & between Main and 77th Out of town East of Meridian & between 5th / 85th & 77th
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Courtesy photo

A park shelter will be built this spring on Bel Aire Recreation Center property.

Lions Club announces project for rec center

By Gary O'Neal

The Bel Aire Lions Club announces a project to build a park shelter at the Bel Aire Rec Center. Construction of the shelter, similar to the one in Bel Aire Park, will begin this spring, with completion late summer in time for the 20th anniversary celebration of the Bel Aire rec center scheduled this fall. Funds from our

fundraising projects such as our Fourth of July fireworks will go toward completion of the shelter.

One-hundred percent of Lions fundraising money goes back into the local area. Watch for shelter updates in the coming months.

For more information on the Bel Aire Lions Club, contact us at www.e-clubhouse.org/sites/belaireks.

Bel Aire hires senior coordinator

By The Breeze staff

Bel Aire's service to its senior population has expanded with a new hire. On Feb. 3, Kristie Kader began serving her role as the city's new senior coordinator. Kader's career includes work in the medical field while she served in the military. She also worked at military activity centers while serving her country.

Kader's experience working with the senior popula-

tion includes volunteer work at retirement homes and senior centers, including in her hometown of Pleasanton.

Kader holds a bachelor's degree in Recreation Administration from Emporia State University.

Congressman visits active business community

By Matt Heilman

Congressman Mike Pompeo found time in his schedule to visit a community that could be on the brink of growth unlike anywhere else in the Wichita area. Bel Aire City Manager Ty Lasher said he was contacted by Pompeo's office in Washington D.C. about two months ago.

In keeping touch with his home base, the congressman wanted to spend some time in the city that has captured headlines with its development opportunities and plans for the future. On his visit to Bel Aire, Pompeo visited two companies that are going strong in the community.

With part of Bel Aire's governing body including three council members and Mayor David Austin, Pompeo toured Wickham Glass in the 4700 block of North Webb Road and Century Manufacturing near 53rd North and Webb Road in Bel Aire's Sunflower Commerce Park.

Wickham Glass is a family-run company that began operating in Bel Aire in 2007. Century Manufacturing broke ground on its facility last year as the first tenant in the commerce park.

On the business tours, Lasher said the employers had a chance to discuss issues at the federal level with the congressmen. Among the chief concerns are the adjustments in the Affordable Care Act and the rising of health insurance rates over the last 10 years.

Lasher said representatives from the businesses also discussed challenges in finding good new employees to replace



Courtesy photo

Congressman Mike Pompeo (center) visits with local leaders.

its aging workforce, retirement issues and the increasing cost for transportation, highlighted by rising fuel costs.

"That one on one conversation was great," Lasher said.

On his visit, Pompeo also had a chance to visit with representatives of the Greater Wichita Area Development Council and Marlin Penner, president and managing broker for Wichita real estate company, John T. Arnold and Associates, which has spearheaded the marketing effort in the Sunflower Commerce Park.

Lasher said city leaders took a few minutes to discuss the progress in the commerce park and to thank Pompeo for helping the city obtain the funding to construct railroad siding that will expand shipping capabilities for future manufacturing businesses on the 800-acre site. Lasher said the grant money for the project was provided by the Kansas Department of Transportation, but the state agency

receives its funding from the Federal Transportation Department.

The development of the Sunflower Commerce Park is pivotal for Bel Aire in combating its land debt that had the city considering abandoning its charter about three years ago. The progress that's been made in the park has been one of the key accomplishments that have helped Bel Aire approve its last two budgets without requiring a tax increase.

Lasher said Pompeo was impressed with what's ongoing in the Sunflower Commerce Park and its potential.

"He was pretty impressed

that we'd take on something of that size," Lasher said.

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